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Herbert Jones: Well, what we want you to do now is just tell us something about you, like where you were born and where you went to school and this type of—

Coreen Glover: I was born here in Tampa, Florida.

HJ: Where'd you go to school? How—did you—

CG: I finished school here, elementary, high school—Booker Washington. Then it was [a] high school. Now I think it's, what, an elementary?

HJ: A junior high now.

CG: It's a junior—umm hmm. Then after my completion of school here I went to school in North Carolina. Raleigh, North Carolina.

HJ: And that was for the nursing school?

CG: Yeah. That was nursing. And it was St. Augustine College, but nursing was one of the branches. And I took up the nursing.

HJ: Okay. Was there anything in particular that motivated you into goin' into nursing?

CG: I've always—from a child, I always wanted to be a nurse. My mother tried to discourage me on many a day. She told me all kinds of things to keep me from wanting to be a nurse. But I told her if I didn't take up nursing I just wouldn't go to school at all. She wanted me to go to Tallahassee and finish school and become a teacher. I was sick of teachers. There were so many teachers and everybody—looked like the black [people] all wanted to be teachers, nothing else.

So I said no, I wanted to be a nurse. I wanted to be a nurse. And, therefore, I know I am really—I was born to be a nurse. I was dedicated. In other words, it wasn't as some people's goal, because of the money they make or something like that. Because right now I'm nursing [for] free. It's just a privilege for me to nurse. I just like to nurse. Although I have retired.

HJ: Umm hmm.

CG: But I'm still nursing. But I'm not being paid for it. Of course, I have been paid through God. He's payin' me off, but man isn't payin'.

HJ: And how many—what was your mother's name and your father's name and this type of thing?

CG: My mother was Mrs. Rebecca Glover and my father was Thomas Glover.

HJ: Do you have any sisters and brothers?

CG: Oh, there was ten of us. There's my oldest sister right there. There's my other sister right there.

HJ: Uh huh.

CG: Ms. Lass was my oldest sister. I'm not bein' recorded, am I?

HJ: Umm hmm.

CG: Yeah? You should have told me that.

HJ: Oh, I thought you knew. They didn't tell you that—well, see, what we're doin' is we're—

pause in recording

CG: —Raleigh, North Carolina and stayed there for three years. I took up social studies. Of course, I wanted to be a public health social worker in nursing. But I didn't quite get up to that because it was two years course and I only took nine months. So, therefore, I just—when I finished my nursing, my first job was public health during the WPA [Works Progress Administration] time. I worked two years as [a] public health nurse then. And after that I went to Clara Frye. Now, the years and stuff, I couldn't remember. That's way back. I think in thirty-six [1936]—would it be thirty-six [1936]? Yeah, thirty-six [1936] I went to work at Clara Frye. That was before y'all was born.

FB: What were the conditions at Clara Frye when you got there?

CG: Well—what you mean about the "conditions"?

FB: Well, I mean, how was it? Was it a well run hospital or—?

CG: Well, for that time, yes. But, now it would be outmoded—outdated or whatnot. But it was the only black—no, it wasn't the only, because there was Small—Venezuela Small's private hospital, then Clara Frye. They were the only two black hospitals in Hillsborough county. And they served the people and they served 'em well. We didn't have—just like they say—oh, of course, now with modern miracle this and modern that—we didn't have as many deaths as they have now.

But the conditions were just like you say; they weren't all that modern. We didn't have the machines and the different things to work with. Now, for instance, to give the anesthetic they had a nurse; she was droppin' the ether. Now, they have a method that just put the mask and it'll put you to sleep in two seconds or a second you're asleep. But, for the—during that time it was all right. And—

FB: What was your pay when you first started? What were you paid?

CG: Now, that calls for more talk. One dollar a day. That's right. Thirty dollars—received thirty dollars a month. And that thirty dollars was big money. We did more with it then than we doin' now with—I know because when I quit nursing we were up to fifty dollars a day. But I did more with a dollar a day than I did with the fifty dollars a day. Of course, I didn't stay long makin' the fifty dollars, which I should have stayed and enjoyed some of the—but I just got tired and I just quit, because I was tired anyway. But we were—were a dollar a day and we were all like a happy family.

We were about—we had, of course, G.W.P. Johnson, I went under his—as a superintendent of the hospital. And he—what do I want to say? He made everything very pleasant. He was not—we took care of everything. Emergencies come in, we had to do the suturin' and all of that, the nurses did. The charge nurse did the suturing in all emergency treatments that came in. We were emergency room. If doctor wasn't there we—most of the time he wasn't there. But the nurses didn't—now, the nurse is not allowed to do that. See? Sure.

HJ: How many nurses were there on the staff at Clara Frye during that time?

CG: During that time it was about—let's see—about eight.

HJ: Eight nurses. And the doctors were local doctors in the community or they had staff doctors, too?

CG: Well, the staff doctors would come in. You know, they were comin' in from Tampa General. It then was Gordon Keller Hospital. And they would, like, if it's pertaining to a—what am I trying to say now? If it was pertaining to throat—tonsilleotomies, or various different types of—the staff doctors would come in. They would call the staff doctor—tracheotomies and different things and whatnot, they would come in.

But we only had to have one doctor, and he was the superintendent. He ran the hospital and he did what he was supposed to do in the hospital. But these other doctors came in, and they were all from Gordon Keller. They worked over at—and then, too—see, it was a city hospital. In fact, Clara Frye was the founder. Anyhow, she went bankrupt and the city took it over, up until today. Of course, not today because it was disbanded. But up until it closed the city had charge of it—so the Clara Frye Hospital. It is still was Clara Frye. Clara Frye Hospital.

HJ: Do you remember Ms. Clara Frye, anything about her, the type person she was, or—

CG: No, I don't know too much about Ms. Clara Frye, because when I got there, as I told you, the city had taken it over. But I have gone to Mrs. Clara Frye's home during the time because she was sick. (inaudible) And she seems to have been a very nice person. It wasn't not—far as knowin' her, now, I do—that's what I say. Now, Mary Case and those would know, because they worked right down with her, see?

HJ: Are they still livin'? Ms. Mary Case is—

pause in recording

CG: All those have since died.

HJ: You know where Ms. Mary Case lives?

CG: It's easy to find. I know she's in the book. But I think somewhere out in North Dakota. But I don't know. I couldn't tell you her number or whatnot.

HJ: Okay, so do you remember any other things about Tampa? Like, when you were comin' up, the conditions of blacks and—you know, just life in general about Tampa when you were growin' up as a girl?

CG: Here in town?

HJ: Umm hmm.

CG: Well, no. Now if you get me out of the nursin' field, no, I won't know too much about it, because that was my life. And now, I'll tell you during time when—oh—as I said, when we were workin' under that dollar a day plan. I think the NYA [National Youth Administration]—I can't remember the year. But anyway, they hired—in fact, the government—I guess y'all never heard about the NYA. You all don't know nothin' about the NYA, do you?

HJ: Umm mm.

CG: It was before your time. Well, anyway, there were thirty girls. And I taught first aid

that the government paid them, in order—that—that was just like now, it was a welfare. You know? They're payin' the people to work or whatever they're doin' now, because I don't know just exactly. But that was the pay that they were givin' these girls in order—instead of just givin' them the money they'd—if they wanted to take up first aid or any profession or somethin' like that, they would pay for it.

So that's where I taught them, 'bout for two years. In fact, that's the biggest I made was five dollars a hour with the NYA. And the girls, I don't know exactly what they got. And, as I said, and many of 'em have since gone to school and finished and have their degree in nursing just through that NYA program. And I don't see what else I can tell you about it.

FB: Did you ever take the bar—the board—

CG: The board.

FB: —board? Did you have to take that, too?

CG: Sure. You can't practice—right, now I just paid seven dollars—you have to pass the board to practice. See, I'm a registered nurse. Of course, there are plenty that's workin' that's not registered. They're practical nurses. They are aides and whatnot. I don't know whether they have to take a board or not, but I do know—but, anyway, I took the Board in North Carolina, where I finished. And I reciprocated this board here in Florida, and since then I've been payin'—every year you have to pay so much to keep that registration.

HJ: What's the score that you have to make on the board to pass, you know, to be able to work?

CG: You've got to pass.

HJ: Yes, but is there a set score? You know, lowest score that you can make before you gonna be able to be eligible?

CG: If you miss them subjects here, you're not gonna—you won't pass. And there's many right now have missed it. Just like the doctors and the undertakers and stuff, plenty of 'em practicin' now haven't passed it. But, you've got to—I mean, come up with those subjects—pass those subjects that they give you. And it was pretty hard. That's how come I wouldn't take Florida's Board. I just took and reciprocated Florida. I paid and then, from then on, pay every year. But, now, North Carolina board, when you pass the board you're through. You don't pay them anything no more.

FB: Miss. Glover, can you tell us some of the pioneer physicians at Clara Frye?

CG: They're dead now. The only ones livin' would be Dr. [Edward O.] Archie, Dr.—you mean the black?

FB: Yes, if you could.

CG: Uh huh. Dr. Lewis—A.L. Lewis—and—

FB: You could even name some of the deceased.

CG: I can. S.E. Johnson—Dr. S.E. Johnson, Dr. J.A. White, Senior—but he's gone; Junior's still livin'. I don't think we—he's somewhere around. I don't know where he—he used to be tubercular. He was over there. But I think he has since left. And, let's see, Dr.—

FB: Was Dr. Williams a member of the staff?

CG: Sure. Dr. R.R. [Reche Reden] Williams, Dr. R.R. Williams, Senior. You said the pioneers, see, and that's why—now, there you have Dr. R.R. Williams, Junior; of course, he's passed too. And you have Dr. Jackson, Dr. A.R. Jackson. You've got Dr. A.A. Andrews. They are the doctors now that are practicing. But they wouldn't be no pioneer by no means. No, but—as I named the others, Archie and those, they started out right along with me in thirty-five [1935]—thirty-six [1936].

FB: Were the majority of the doctors general practitioners, or were they in—

CG: Who?

FB: During that time, were they general practitioners, or—

CG: All of 'em, round—I think Dr. Jackson says he's specializing in something. And I think, Dr. Andrews. I don't know what the special— but all the others were general practitioner. See, in that day they took care of everything. But in this day now it requires you to specialize in various fields of medicine.

FB: Okay, Ms. Glover, you said that you're still nursin', but you're not bein' paid. Where do you render this service?

CG: Anywhere my phone—I thought whenever I was callin'—somebody's callin' me and when they do I go to see about them. And when I do see, and I do not—I'm not bein' paid for it, because I go when I feel like it. You understand? And that's why I say I'm still— in other words—well, many times I've said, “Well, I might as well have stayed on the payroll as to be—” But I get a kick out of it. That's my joy.

FB: Did you do that much when you were employed? You know, like people would get sick and they would call you?

CG: Well, I would go whenever they called me. It was kind of hard. Plenty of times I had to—even as a staff nurse I would do a little private [nursing] because they insisted. Knowing me in the hospital there and whenever they'd go home or some of their family

get sick they would call me. Well, on my days off, like if I had to make eight hours I had sixteen hours left. I would squeeze an hour or two or three and give them a few hours like that.

FB: So the medical field in Tampa during the early thirties [1930s] then, as far as—it was hoppin' huh, in as far as black people are concerned?

CG: You say it was what?

FB: Hoppin'. Jumpin'.

CG: Well, it kept you goin'. It kept you goin' because you didn't have that many. See, now it's crowded. The field is so crowded. That's what I say, with the white, there are so many. And most of the people are usin' the whites. But that's—when I started out the blacks used to use the blacks regardless. But now it's, "Oh, he specialized in this. He's a specialist, he's a this—" See, they're now leanin' toward the specialist. Wherein, before, all they did was leadin' to the doctor, or that he was a doctor and that's what they were leanin' on, the doctor.

FB: Okay, Ms. Glover, gettin' back to the thirties [1930s] and forties [1940s], can you see a difference between the way hospitals were run then and the way they're run now?

CG: Oh, yeah, it's quite a difference, quite a difference. I said, the modern—everything is modern. Now, to me, I'm not gonna say 'cause—to me, the people seem to have been more happier. And I say we seem to have had less death. I can't understand. Maybe we—or maybe the population has increased to that extent that we have—but you have your undertakers now are crowd—it's crowded. Wherein, when we had one or two deaths, that was something. Everybody was talkin' about that. Or you wasn't. Or you didn't do your job or somethin' lackin'. But now, "Oh, he's dead, he died, or he died—" It's just like nothin'.

FB: Y'all delivered babies and everything, also.

CG: Oh, my. If I had the daughters—I had the daughters, I delivered the babies. I mean, even when I did private duty nursin' we would go to these homes. In fact, the women didn't go to hospitals then to have no babies. We'd go to 'em. And, I mean, they didn't have anything. You're talkin' about almost primitive. They didn't have—we had to improvise things to use, and there wasn't nothin'. I delivered quite a number. I can't count the number of babies I've delivered.

HJ: Were you taught that while you were in school, how to deliver, or that's just something that—

CG: Well, yeah, we had six months, or they put a period of training that you had to have. But they didn't teach us to deliver babies. See, the doctor always did that, but we observed. Understand? But when we got out, you was put to the task. We had to do it.

And then they wasn't gonna come back—now, I've wondered if you go out now they may have you up—but then they would (laughs) they would have you up for not deliverin' it. You understand?

HJ: Umm hmm. Okay, like you doin' the volunteer work that you do, so you still have to pay that money on the board thing. Do you still—are you still payin' that?

CG: Oh, the register, yeah. You're for—I think it's seven dollars a year. See, they require—or else they would take your license. They would take your license from you.

HJ: So the doctors and nurses and teachers and people like that, were they highly respected among the black community during those times?

CG: Oh, yeah. Umm hmm.

FB: Who was the head administrator over the—?

CG: Over?

FB: Over the Clara Frye during your period—?

CG: G.W.P. Johnson.

FB: Mr. Johnson.

CG: Dr. Johnson. Uh huh. And then, too, now you've come at—when—see, that was before integration. After integration—Humphrey, what year was that?

Humphrey: Seventy [1970].

CG: Was it seventy [1970]? Y'all ought to know it, the year, you just—

Humphrey: It was seventy [1970].

CG: It was seventy [1970].

Humphrey: Umm hmm.

CG: Uh huh. Then, they put the white—huh? The white became umm—and umm—then they began to mixin' the staff. Whereas I was a head nurse for six years at Clara Frye then. In fact, I had to stop during the time because I had a sickness in my family—my mother was sick, and I stayed home with her. When I went back there they had put a white director of nurses. And we worked under a white director of nurses until—in fact, there were quite a number of colored head nurses in between. But they definitely put that white—

And integration, one thing I can tell you what the integration did, it really put the black man a little further down. And that exists today. If you were [to] take a walk over in Tampa General you would see it. They may have you—they have us at the desk and whatnot, but we were black nurses now, lest anybody forget we were black nurses. That's right. And, in other words, after this integration, had it stayed like it was I don't know whether it would have been better or not. I was thinkin' about some article I read in the paper where they said tha— was it Ocala or somethin'—they don't want integration of the schools?

Humphrey: Umm hmm. It's Ocala.

CG: It's Ocala.

Humphrey: Right.

CG: And I said to myself, I can see it to a certain extent, now. You've got to be in there to know exactly what they're talking about. Now, as I say, the black doctors fought for integration in the hospital, but that was to their gain. You understand? It was really for their gain. I guess they wanted the modern facilities. They want—because they said they wanted to give blacks the facilities that they had. They wanted—like for instance, Tampa General can do the open heart surgery and all that. You know, they couldn't do that over at Clara Frye. Naturally, they wanted to get that. I said, that was for the gain. But, to a certain extent, the patients weren't that happy. They weren't that happy.

HJ: (inaudible)

CG: Well, you'll have to ask me because— (laughs)

HJ: Oh, when did Clara Frye close down? When did they close Clara Frye down?

CG: They closed Clara Frye about—let me see, I'm tryin' to think now—I wouldn't know exactly the year. I think it was in, oh, about—this is seventy-eight [1978], isn't it?

HJ: Umm hmm.

CG: Mmm—I've been here eight years—

HJ: Did you work in any other hospitals besides Clara Frye after—or you resigned and—tired at Clara Frye?

CG: No, I went over to Tampa General. I went over to Tampa General and I worked Tampa General about two years. And, as I say, I'll be perfectly frank, I didn't enjoy it. I didn't enjoy my nursin' over to Tampa General because it was quite a different atmosphere.

Now, the man that had to work—I ain't gonna tell you I didn't have to work, because I

needed to work as bad as anybody else—but I'm say the man that had to work, he could put up with this conditions and insults. But there's one of the nurses—one of the white nurses—said I didn't have to. I had just as much to as she did—excuse me—as she did. But what she—

No, I had pride in mine. That's right. Some of the things I have swallowed and some I couldn't. And, as they say, well, Ms. Glover you've been working off and on for the past thirty-some years. That is true. As Johnny Mathis says, "I saved the some— I spent some and I saved some." So, therefore, I wasn't the type that was I had it to do. But I didn't have it to do.

FB: Just because you wanted to do it, right?

CG: Ummm?

FB: I say, you did it because you wanted to do it.

CG: I did it because I liked it. See? As I said, I like it. I like nursing and would have done—and, as you said, have I worked in any other hospital? Well, I went down to Manatee—but you want Hillsborough, is that it?

FB: Right.

CG: Because I went down to Manatee County and I worked there. I worked at the government hospital in Belle Glade for two years and did migrant—with those migrant workers when they would come over. I did public health nursin' with them. But, as I say, I was in and out of Clara Frye. Now, I didn't work no thirty-five years in Clara Frye, by no means. I put in about twenty years. The other was in and out. Whenever I got tired I would leave.

HJ: (inaudible)

CG: Umm hmm.

FB: Are you related to Reverend Glover?

CG: No. You know Reverend Glover? Because I remember when his church—you remember when his church was there?

FB: I don't remember when his church was there, but I remember him.

CG: Yeah. Where do you know Reverend Glover?

FB: From—what's the name of his church? I went to his church one Sunday.

CG: In St. Petersburg?

FB: Uh huh.

CG: Yeah?

FB: And I just thought, you know, maybe, that you might—

CG: Well, you know, his wife used to always—his first wife, I didn't know the second wife. His first wife, she would always used to sit with me at the church, right in front here.

FB: Hmm.

CG: And she always say you reach him but you don't know it. (laughs) Yeah, I know Reverend Glover well, uh huh—his first wife, but I didn't know his second wife.

HJ: Okay, Mrs. Glover, that's all I have for you.

FB: Yes, I will arrange for a photographer to come by and take your picture within the next week.

CG: You've got to be kiddin'. I don't take no pictures. You see somethin' that look like me up there? You see somebody look like up there?

FB: No.

CG: Because I take a terrible—

HJ: Is that you right there?

CG: If it's a nurse.

FB: Is this your mother?

CG: Huh? It's a nurse.

FB: Is this you?

CG: In a nurse's uniform?

HJ: Black dress with a white thing?

CG: No. That's my mother.

HJ: Oh, that's you right there with the nurse's uniform?

CG: You mu—

end of interview